

August 2015

Adult Medi-Cal Enrollment Surges, Uninsured Rate Plummets in 2014

Shana Alex Charles

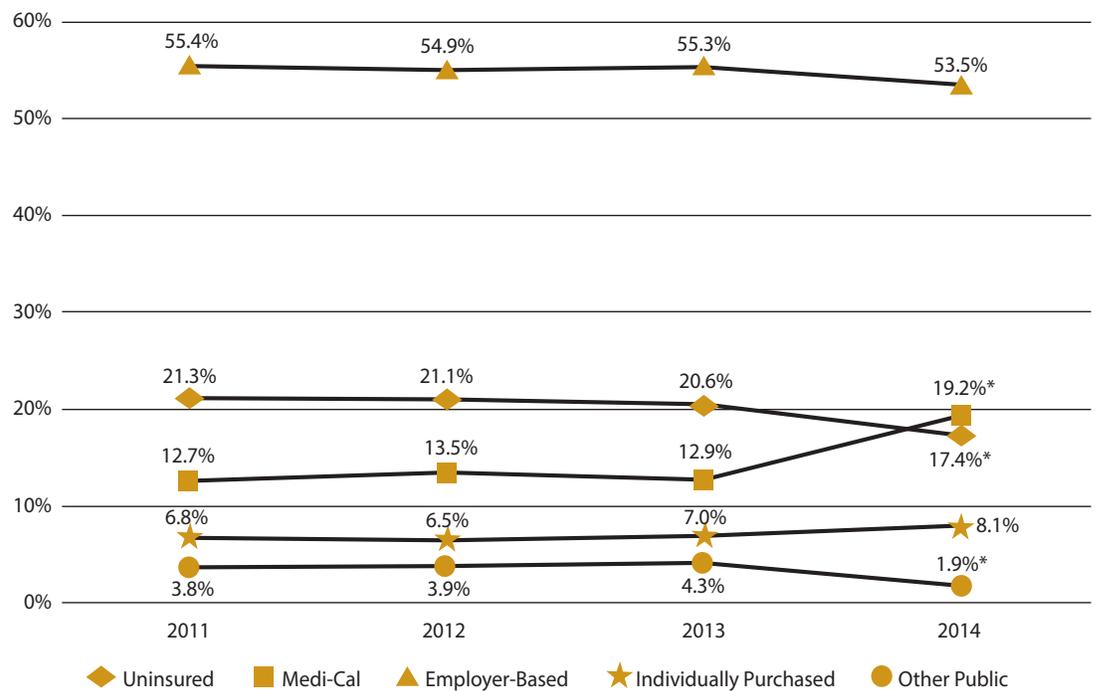
New data from the 2014 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS 2014) show the statewide impact of major health insurance expansions under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). On January 1, 2014, Medi-Cal expanded eligibility to everyone with a household income just above the federal poverty level,[†] including adults without dependent

children, and enrollment in the program surged. As a result, for the first time, nearly one in five (19.2%) adults ages 19-64 were enrolled in Medi-Cal in 2014, compared to 12.9% in the previous year (Exhibit 1). As Medi-Cal enrollment grew, the rate of uninsured adults fell by more than three percentage points, to 17.4%. In an unprecedented trend among California's adult population, Medi-Cal enrollment rose slightly above the uninsured rate in 2014 (Exhibit 1).

[†] Eligibility for Medi-Cal expanded to include household incomes up to 138% of the federal poverty level. In 2014, this equated to \$15,971 for a one-person household and \$32,975 for a four-person household.

Exhibit 1

Current Health Insurance Coverage Among Adults, Ages 19 - 64, California, 2011-2014



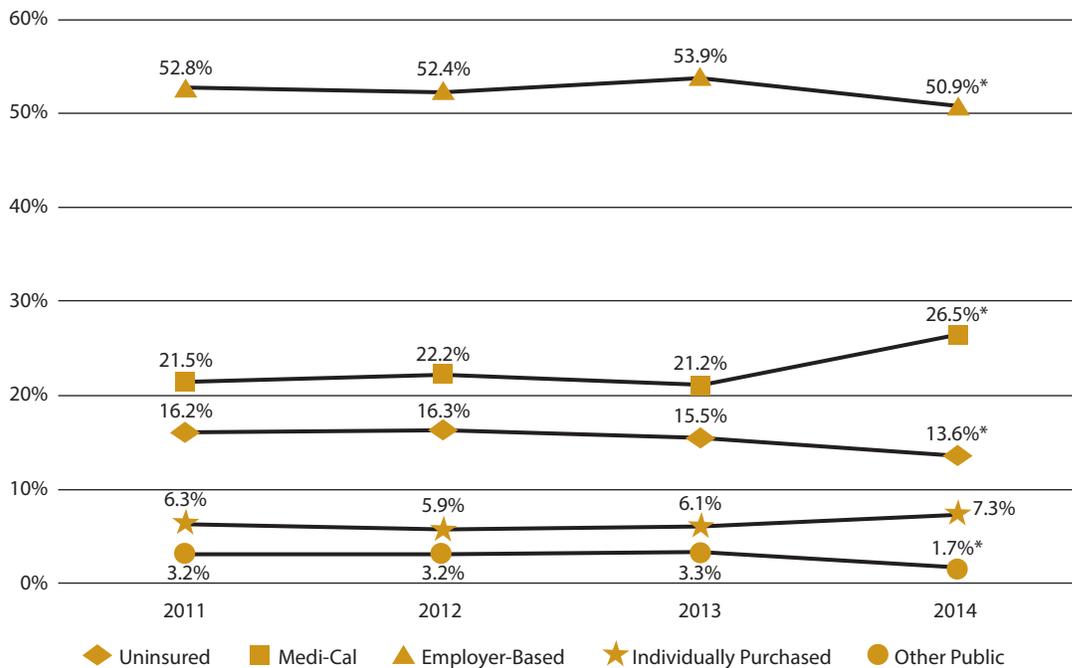
Sources: 2011-2014 California Health Interview Surveys (annual)

Note: Numbers may not add to 100% due to rounding.

* Data are significantly different from the previous year at the 95% confidence level.

Exhibit 2

Current Health Insurance Coverage Among All Nonelderly Persons, Ages 0 - 64, California, 2011-2014



Sources: 2011-2014 California Health Interview Surveys (annual)

Note: Numbers may not add to 100% due to rounding.

* Data are significantly different from the previous year at the 95% confidence level.

Among all nonelderly Californians, the uninsured rate declined to a new low of 13.6% (Exhibit 2). Medi-Cal coverage increased to over one in four (26.5%), while employer-based coverage continued to insure more than half of all nonelderly persons (50.9%). Enrollment of the nonelderly in public programs other than Medi-Cal, including Medicare and Aid to Infants and Mothers (AIM), declined to just under 2% of the population (1.7%; Exhibit 2).

Comparing CHIS 2014 health insurance rates to those of the prior three years provides clear support for the importance of the impact

ACA expansions have had on the health insurance status of nonelderly Californians. The significant increases in public and private individually purchased coverage provide strong evidence that the ACA has significantly improved access to health insurance for millions of Californians. Nevertheless, 13.6% of the nonelderly population remains uninsured, so more work remains to be done to make health insurance accessible for all Californians.

Methods and Data Source

This fact sheet presents new continuous data from the 2014 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), which includes about 20,000 households in California. It also includes data from the continuous 2011, 2012, and 2013 CHIS datasets, each of similar sample size. For more information about CHIS, please see www.chis.ucla.edu. In order to capture the movement of health insurance statuses and types due to the ACA expansions that began on January 1, 2014, this fact sheet uses “current health insurance status” as the time frame for measurement. This study therefore captures a point-in-time measurement, and the results should not be interpreted as depicting insurance status over the past 12 months.

Author Information

Shana Alex Charles, PhD, MPP, is the director of health insurance studies and a research scientist at the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research.

Funding

This fact sheet was published with funding from the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), which is a collaborative project of the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, the California Department of Public Health, and the California Department of Health Care Services. More information about CHIS 2011-2014 funding is available at www.chis.ucla.edu.

Suggested Citation

Charles SA. *Adult Medi-Cal Enrollment Surges, Uninsured Rate Plummets in 2014*. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, August 2015.



This publication contains data from the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), the nation's largest state health survey.

Conducted by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, CHIS data give a detailed picture of the health and health care needs of California's large and diverse population.

Learn more at:

www.chis.ucla.edu



Read this publication
online

FS2015-3